

# The Chronicle of the EARLY AMERICAN INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

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## The Lumberman

By HOWARD G. HUBBARD

A hard bitten life was the lot of the American lumberjack of a century ago, yet a life with fascinations which lured men back into trackless wilds winter after winter. Some went for the money which was to be won, but I suspect that more loved the life, the rough companionship, and the still deep forests. John M'Gregor, in his book, *British America*, 1832, has preserved for us a vivid picture of this industry. He deals specifically with Canada, but lumbering was lumbering, whether in this country or over the line.

"The stock deemed necessary for a lumbering party consists of axes, a cross-cut saw, cooking utensils, a cask of rum, tobacco, and pipes; a sufficient quantity of biscuits, pork, beef, fish, peas, and pearl barley for soup, with a cask of molasses to sweeten a decoction usually made of shrubs, or the tops of the hemlock tree, and taken as tea. Two or three yokes of oxen, with sufficient hay to feed them, are also required to haul the timber out of the woods.

"When thus prepared, these people proceed up the rivers, with the provisions, to the place fixed on for their winter establishment, which is selected as near a stream of water as possible. They commence by clearing away a few of the surrounding trees, and building a shanty, or camp of round logs, the walls of which are seldom more than four or five feet high; the roof is covered with birch bark, or boards. A pit is dug under the camp to preserve anything liable to injury from the frost. The fire is either in the middle or at one end—the smoke goes out through the roof,—hay, straw, or fir branches are spread across or along the whole length of the habitation, on which they will all lay down at night to sleep, with their feet over

the fire. When the fire gets low, he who first awakes or feels cold, springs up, and throws on five or six billets, and in this way they manage to have

### Our Purpose

The purpose of the association is to encourage the study and better understanding of early American industry, in the home, in the shop, on the farm, and on the sea, and especially to discover, identify, classify, preserve and exhibit obsolete tools, implements, utensils, instruments, vehicles, appliances and mechanical devices used by American craftsmen, farmers, housewives, mariners, professional men and other workers.

### Dues

The annual dues are one dollar, payable September first, for the year immediately ensuing. *The Chronicle* for the current year is sent to all members without additional charge. Back numbers (except No. 12) may be secured from the Treasurer for 20c each. For further information, address any of the officers. See page 5.

a large fire all night. One person is hired as cook, whose duty it is to have breakfast ready before daylight, at which time all the party rise, when each takes his morning, or the indispensable dram of raw spirits, immediately before breakfast. These men are enormous eaters; and they also drink immense quantities of rum, which they scarcely ever dilute.

"Immediately after breakfast, they divide into three gangs, one of which cuts down the trees, another hews them, and the third is employed with the oxen in hauling the timber, either to one general road leading to the banks of the nearest stream, or at once to the stream itself; fallen trees, and other impediments in the way of the

*(Continued on page 2, column 2)*

## "Ox-Yoake Keys"

By LAWRENCE B. ROMAINE

*"To Abiah Randall*

June, 2nd, 1773. Mending staple and ox ring and making yoake key—your iron 1 sh. 6 pence  
July, 3rd, 1774. Making staple and capring to ox yoake and your key—your iron 2 sh. 5 pence  
June, 2nd, 1776. Mending brod hoe and yoake key 4 pence  
Jan. 6th, 1777. Making you key for your yoake 3 pence"

When one mentions ox-yoake keys, most people act as they do when introduced without "catching the name". The average individual, if the problem worried him at all, would feel fairly sure that the various appendages of a yoke were held together by crude iron nails or hand-whittled oak pins.

The oxen-yoke, for the benefit of those not familiar with it at all, consists of a wooden cross piece, usually of oak or some other hard wood, shaped to fit the animal's neck, with one or two bows fitted to it to encircle the throat like a collar. The single yokes did not require the heavy hand-wrought keys, the one bow being fastened with wood pins, nails, and later with various hairpin contraptions. Of course, the bows are held the same way in double yokes. In 1878, a patent bow-pin was invented and manufactured, though I have never found one on a yoke. Two half circles of metal, worked on a spring with projections for the fingers, surround the pin. These are spread apart for insertion of the pin, and then snap shut around the end of the bow.

The double yoke, as you can guess, has two of these bows, one at either end. Between them, where the heavy oak cross piece is not shaped and retains its full strength, hangs the "capring" for the wagon-tongue, secured on a huge hand-wrought staple. The staple is driven through the cross piece. The two prongs that are pro-

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truding from the cross piece have two slits or holes in them. The key is inserted, hammered into place and turned, so as to lie down flat, locking the "capring" in to stand the stress and strain of the weaving wagon tongue.

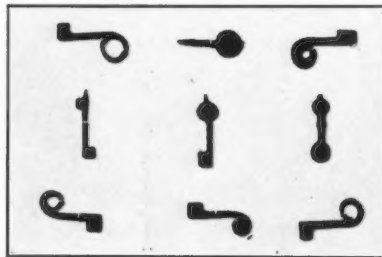
The first one I found, I carried with me for almost a year before meeting anyone who could explain its purpose. Finally I found one in use. In fact, it is still in use, and the powerful pair of oxen will be in my woods again before very long, hauling logs out of the swamp.

The picture shows nine of the most unusual examples in my collection. One end is shaped exactly like a key, without the slits and notches for the wards of the lock. This end, being flat, can be forced through the slits in the staple ends and then turned to lie as pictured. With the weight of the ring and tongue,—if properly fitted,—they will never come out unless turned. I have found several cases where a wrought iron "8" or flat S-shaped piece is fitted around the ends of the staple for the key to lie on, thus preventing wearing away of the wood and loosening of the key.

The keys in the bottom row of the picture show the familiar ram's horn finial quite distinctly. Top row, right and left, also give variations of the same detail. The top row center and the three in the middle row do not show the smith's originality as I wish they could. Top row center is the most unusual. One end is exactly like the old iron "striker" that drives in the jamb of the door to catch the latch bar when the door is closed. The other is flattened out to a cobra's head with a tiny curl or horn finial, which, I imagine, would be very handy to pull out the key, if a new ring or staple were needed. The most delicate embellishment of the old blacksmith often turns out to be a very practical member. Every yoke key I have seen has had a curl of iron that would answer such a purpose, except a few which were nothing but bars of iron, and very likely replacements made in later times. Each of the keys in the center row shows at the top the curled horn finial. In many cases, one can imagine the smith taking the same pains over one of these little pins as he would over his best latch.

Even though it is pure romance, compare the ancient ox wagon with the new 1936 Ford truck! The Ford is way beyond the wildest dreams of

the old man who made the wagons, certainly, and yet there are details that one overlooks. Taking into consideration the equipment on hand for the manufacture of both, compare the cotter-pin and the ox-yoke key. There is something far superior about the old hand-forged nuts, pins, keys and bolts. It is ridiculous to even think of anyone taking an hour to make almost any part of a car! Mass production and the chain stores have taken a certain quaintness away from the picture of transportation.



OX-YOKE KEYS

Mr. Randall's bill, which is printed at the head of these notes, was settled in full about 1800! The "yoake keys" were not very expensive articles, and one would think a man could have managed to "foot the bill" sooner. Nevertheless, there is something familiar about the delay that is very modern. I wish I could buy a thousand different designs at those prices—for cash!



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(Continued from page 1, column 2)

oxen, are cut away with an axe. The whole winter is thus spent in unremitting labour. The snow covers the ground from two to three feet from the setting-in of winter until April; and, in the middle of fir forests, often till the middle of May. When the snow begins to dissolve in the middle of April, the rivers swell, or, according to the lumberer's phrase, the 'freshets come down.' At this time all the timber cut during the winter is thrown into the water, and floated down until the river becomes sufficiently wide to make the whole into one or more rafts.

"The construction of the vast masses of timber floated down the St. Lawrence, and other great rivers of America, is nearly on all occasions similar. The raftsmen commence by floating twenty or more pieces of timber along-

side each other, with the ends to form the forepart of the raft brought into line, and then bound close together by logs placed across these, and by binding one log to another by poles fastened down by withes, plugged firmly into holes bored in the logs for the purpose. The size of the raft is increased in this manner by adding pieces of timber, one after another, with their unequal lengths crossing the joints, until the whole lot of timber to be rafted is joined together in one flat mass in the river. The water at this period is exceedingly cold, yet, for weeks together, the lumberers are in it from morning till night, and it is seldom less than a month and a half from the time that the floating the timber down the stream commences, until the rafts are delivered to the merchants. No course of life can undermine the constitution more than that of the lumberer and the raftsmen. The winter, snow, and frost, although severe, are nothing to endure in comparison to the extreme coldness of the snow-water in the freshets, in which the lumberer is, day after day, wet up to the middle, and often immersed from head to foot. The very vitals are thus chilled and sapped; the intense heat of the summer sun, a transition which almost immediately follows, must further weaken and reduce the whole frame, and premature old age is the inevitable fate of the lumberer.

"But notwithstanding all the toils of such a pursuit, those who once adopt the life prefer it to any other. After selling and delivering up their rafts, they pass some weeks in idle indulgence, drinking, smoking, and 'dashing off' in a long coat, flashy waistcoat, and trousers, Wellington or Hessian boots, a handkerchief of many colours around the neck, a watch with a long tinsel chain, and an umbrella. Before winter they return again to the woods, and resume again the laborious pursuits of the preceding year. The greater number of the lumberers and raftsmen in Canada are from the United States. Many young men of steady habits are in the habit of joining the lumber parties for two or three years, for the express purpose of making money; and, after saving their earnings, purchase or receive grants of land, on which they live very comfortably, cultivating the soil, and occasionally cutting down the timber trees on their land for the market."

(Continued in next issue)

# Early American Industries Association

## The Tanner and the Currier

(Continued from last issue)

By WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE

(AUTHOR'S NOTE—The capital letters interspersed through the text refer to the list of authorities at the end of the article, the page number being given as well, when thought necessary. The expression "No Fig." means that we have been unable to find a specimen of the article in question, from which an illustration could be made.)

The tanner's work was now done, and such of his product as was intended for sole leather and the like was finished (P), but where it was to be used by the shoemaker (for uppers), the coach or harness maker (F, G), or the book-binder (L), it must needs be worked upon by the currier, to improve its smoothness, color, lustre and suppleness (F, G). "The currier's shop has no resemblance to the tanner's premises, having a quite different set of tools and manipulations" (F) although "except in and near large cities, the business of tanning and currying are usually united in the same individual; or, at least, the two branches of business are carried on together, by the aid of workmen skilled in their respective trades" (H).

The leather turned over by the tanner to the currier was almost as stiff as a board (R) and was thoroughly soaked in water to make it more workable (G, H, L, K). For the same purpose, "the currier employs a strong hurdle about a yard square (No Fig.), made either of basket twigs, or of wooden spars, fixed rectangularly like trellis work, with holes 3 inches square, upon which he treads the leather, or beats it with a mallet or hammer. \* \* \* The mace (No Fig.) is made of wood, having a handle 30 inches long, with a cubical head, upon the two faces of which, parallel to the line of the handle, there are 4 pegs of hard wood turned of an egg-shape, and well polished, so as not to tear the moistened leather" (F).

The curriers *beam* (Fig. 2 A) bore little resemblance to that of the tanner. It consisted of an upright plank, sometimes adjustable as to angle (G), and faced with a piece of *lignum vitae* (I, O, G), about two feet long, two inches thick and six inches wide, called a *beam board* (L). Beam boards were imported in the required size and shape (L). The shaving knife (Fig. 2 F), sometimes called a *head knife*, was a most curious and interesting instru-

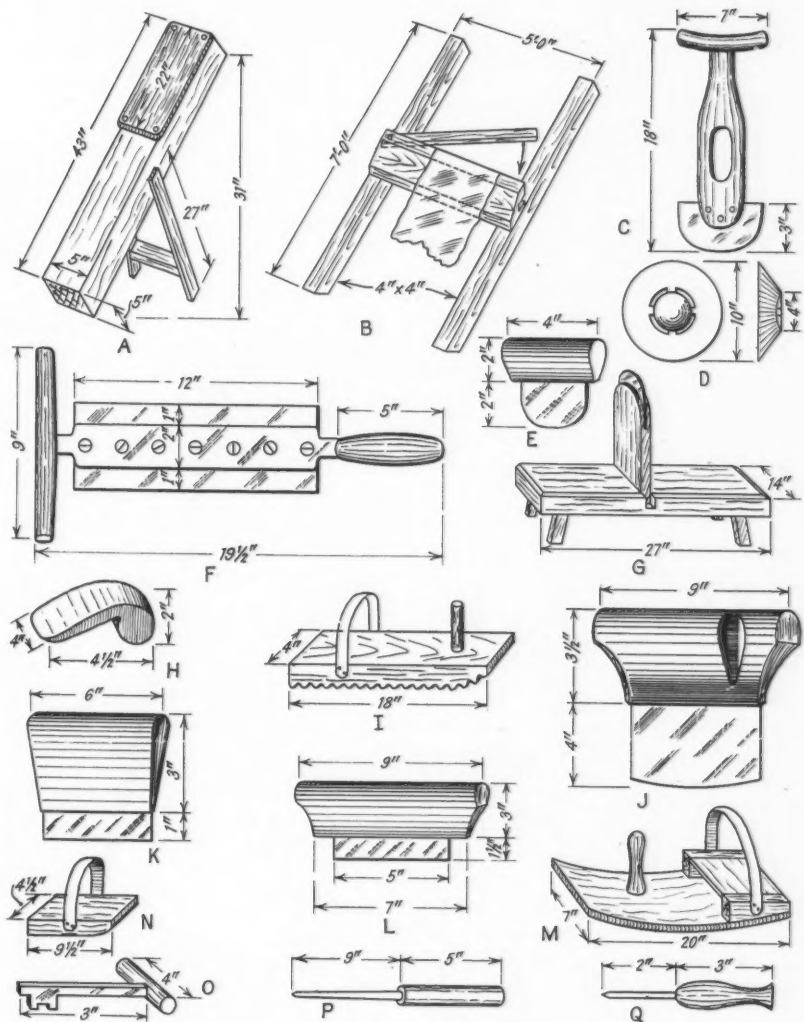


Fig. 2—CURRIER'S TOOLS

A.—Beam, on which skin was shaved with knife (F). B.—Perch, in which skin was clamped for "staking." C.—Arm Stake, for stretching and smoothing. D.—Round Knife. E.—Glass Slicker. F.—Shaving, or Head, Knife. G.—Staking Stand. H.—Brass Slicker. I.—Raising Board, for graining. J.—Steel Slicker. K.—Iron Slicker. L.—Stone Slicker. M.—Cork Paumelle. N.—Raising Board. O.—Key for Shaving Knife. P.—Turning Steel. Q.—Finger Steel.

ment. It consisted of a flat metal blade, about a foot long and a third as broad, the round handle at one end being in prolongation of the long dimension of the blade, and the other at right angles, but in the same plane (D663, L). In the most primitive type, but one piece of metal is employed, with tangs at either end driven into the handles, but, at an early date, and while these tools were still made by the blacksmith, the blade, a separate piece, was held between two flat bars or narrow plates, two or three inches wide, the ends of

which entered the handles (I). Sometimes the blade was fixed in place between the plates by rivets, and sometimes by threaded screws, and occasionally the handles also were screwed on to the ends of the plates, in which case, in order to take the tool apart, it was necessary to use a sort of key (Fig. 2 O), the end of which turned the heads of the screws which held the plates together, and the two lateral projections engaged in corresponding recesses in the end of the straight handle, so that the key could be oper-



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ated as a crank to loosen it. The blade wore down so rapidly, through constant whetting, that it was worth-while economy to replace it, rather than discard the whole tool (R). Each side of the blade was "brought to a wire edge by rubbing on a stone of coarse grit" (L) called the *rub-stone* (D1998, No Fig.), "which edge is afterwards taken off, and a finer edge produced by a finer and softer stone" (L) called the *clearing-stone* (D1998, No Fig.). "The cross handle of the knife is then firmly fixed between the workman's knees, and while in a kneeling posture, he turns the edges to an angle with their former position, by means of a polished steel, similar in shape to a butcher's steel" (L), called the *turning steel* (D2366, Fig. 2 P). The wet skin (L) "being thrown flesh uppermost over the vertical beam, the shaver presses his body against it, and leaning over the top, holds the knife by its two handles, almost at right angles to the leather, and proceeds to shave it by a scraping stroke downward, which the wire edge, being set at right angles to the knife and almost parallel with the skin, turns into a cut" (I). The position of the skin was constantly shifted, so as to bring all parts of it under the action of the knife, the shaver frequently passing a fold between his fingers to test the progress of his work (G, I). To preserve the keenness of the knife, a smaller steel, called the *finger steel* (D2366, Fig. 2 Q) was constantly held between the workman's fingers (G, L) by the knob at the end of the handle, and as often as necessary, was passed along the edge (G, I) "the point within, and the side without the groove, formed by the turned edge" (L). The object of the shaving operation was to reduce and equalize the thickness of the leather (G, O).

The skin was then soaked in a weak solution of soft soap and borax (I), thrown, flesh side down, upon a table of stone or mahogany (G, No Fig.) and worked with a steel *slicker* (I, Fig. 2 J), sometimes called a *stretching iron* (D2427, F. G. O), to eliminate lumps and inequalities and to extend the skin (F, O). "The wooden part (of the slicker) is grasped in both hands and the blade is half rubbed and half scraped over the surface of the leather in successive strokes, the angle of the slicker being a continuation of the angle which the thrust out arms of the worker form with the body, perhaps 30° or 45°, with the leather, depending on the pressure to be applied"

(I). It was then *soured* on the grain or hair side with pumice stone (F, I, K, L), to clean off the surface bloom (F, K), and afterwards *sleeked* with a steel or brass slicker (I, Fig. 2 H) and then dried, and *stuffed* or *dubbed* (probably a corruption of daubed) with oil (F, G, K, L). "All the oiled or dressed skins are dressed with the round knife (Fig. 2 D), — a circular knife from 10 to 12 inches in diameter, with a round 4 or 5 inch hole in its center, for introducing the hands and working it. It is concave, presenting the form of a spherical zone. The concave part is that applied to the skin. Its edge is not perfectly straight; but is a little turned over on the side opposite to the skin, to prevent it from entering too far into the leather. \* \* \* A cylindrical bar fixed horizontally at its ends to two buttresses projecting from the wall, serves by means of a parallel stretched cord, to fix a skin by a coil or two in order to dress it. This is accordingly called the *dresser* (No Fig.). \* \* \* Strong-toothed pincers (No Fig.) with hook-end handles, drawn together by an endless cord, are employed to stretch the leather in any direction, while it is being dressed" (F). The workman then "lays hold of the pendant under edge with the pincers attached to his girdle, and with both hands applies the edge of the knife to the surface of the leather, slantingly from above downwards, and thus pares off the coarser fleshy parts of the skin. This operation requires great experience and dexterity; and when well performed improves greatly the look of the leather" (F).

(Continued in next issue)

## Farm Implements of 1803

(Continued from last issue)

A "hoddling-scythe" for destroying rushes. "This implement is nothing more than a short, strong scythe, the blade about 20 inches in length, but curves in a different manner to the common scythe; the edge is nearly, one way of it, in a straight direction from heel to point, but the flat part of the blade forms a curvature, which varies about 4 inches from a straight line. The sneath, or sneyd, to which the blade is fixed, is about 3 feet 6 inches long, and has one scythe-like handle placed about 18 inches from the top: when the work is performed, one hand is placed upon the top of the

sneath, and with the handle in the other, the crown of the rush roots, by a smart stroke of the implement, is scooped out by the convex part of the blade."<sup>288</sup> "The pith of rushes is "used instead of cotton to make the wick of rush lights."<sup>288</sup>

"Figure 1, in the plate, represents a turnip *transplanter*, used to fill up spots in fields where they have failed. The method of using it is, to hold the long handle with the left hand, and the short handle with the right drawn up; put the instrument over the plant that is to be taken up, and with your feet force it into the ground, then give it a twist round, and by drawing it gently up, the earth will adhere to the roots of the plant in a solid body; then with another instrument of the same size, take the earth out where the plant is to be put, and bringing the instrument with the plant in it, put it into the hole which has been made with the other; then keep your right hand steady, and draw up your left, and the earth and plant will be left in the hole with the root undisturbed."<sup>325</sup> "The turnips are to be put into a barrel or tub and cut small with an instrument like a hoe, with the blade put perpendicularly on the shaft."<sup>329</sup>

A trap for weasels and pole-cats "consists of a wooden box, or hutch, resembling the dog kennel, which is usually provided for a yard dog; its form being that of a barn. It is divided in the middle by an open wire partition running from end to end, and reaching from the edge of the roof to the floor; one side of this partition is again divided into two parts, or cages; one of them for a tame rabbit, the other for a live fowl, to allure the vermin; the other half of the hutch being formed into a falling box to take them."<sup>331</sup>

A successful trap for sparrows "is made on the principle of a fish pot; it is made of brown unpeeled ozers, the diameter about 2 feet; the depth 9 inches; the top is somewhat dished, with a tunnel or inverted cone in the centre, reaching to within about an inch of the bottom of the basket; the aperture, or entrance, formed by the points of the twigs of which the tunnel is constructed, being about 1½ inch in diameter; the best bait, wheat scattered in the basket."<sup>333</sup>

The first United States patent law was enacted in 1790, but only 306 patents were issued prior to 1800.

# Early American Industries Association

## Early American Industries Association

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W. B. SPRAGUE, Editor.

## Bound CHRONICLE

It has recently come to our attention that several members have casually expressed their intention of having their files of *THE CHRONICLE* bound, but we trust that no one thus far has actually done so. We estimate that about twenty-four numbers would make a handy-sized volume, and it is our definite plan, when that many have been issued, to make the most favorable arrangement possible with a binding concern, so that members may send in their files and have them all treated alike. It is assumed that everyone would prefer a cover which would be standard and uniform, but a more important consideration is that the volume, to be thoroughly useful for reference purposes, should contain an index. This index has been prepared, with respect to the numbers already issued, and will be amplified to cover future numbers, and distributed to the members, when the time comes to bind Volume I. A spring-back binder is recommended for keeping your copies clean and handy for reference. Of course, when permanently bound, they will all be cut to a uniform size.

## Local Meetings

On November 21st, a meeting of members living in New York or nearby, was held at the Russell Sage Foundation Building. The featured attraction was an informal talk by Mr. Allen Eaton on "Ancient Industries as practised in the Southern Highlands", which proved to be fully as interesting as its title would indicate. Mr. Eaton is a gifted speaker, and supplemented his word pictures with a most remarkable series of photographs, showing how the inhabitants of these remote sections of our Southern States still carry on the trades and household activities which were practically abandoned in the more developed sections of the country well over a century ago. He also showed extraordinary examples of their handiwork in whittling, basket-making, weaving and the like.

As to the Massachusetts meeting on November 23rd, we cannot do better than to reprint the excellent account which appeared in the *New York Sun*, as follows:

"Fifty members of the Early American Industries Association gathered at Northampton, Mass., last Saturday for an informal meeting and a dinner in Wiggins's Old Tavern as guests of Lewis N. Wiggins, the landlord. Representatives of the association were present from all the New England States, as well as from New York and New Jersey.

"Many of the members brought objects from their collections either for identification or for trading, and many a knotty point regarding the use of a forgotten tool was cleared up. There was also considerable bartering, for members of the 'Pick and Shovel Club' like to carry on the good old New England tradition of swapping.

"The dinner was one which taxed the capacities of the guests, for it included New England bean soup, Virginia ham, vegetables, and ended with New England mince pie. There were also by actual count ten relishes of the sort for which Pennsylvania is famous. After the dinner a tribute to Mr. Wiggins on behalf of the members was voiced by Charles Messer Stow.

"Then the collectors gathered around the tables on which were set forth the objects which had been brought, and the discussion was carried on till late. It was all informal and enjoyable and was a typical regional meeting of the sort which the

Early American Industries Association recommends.

"The research work that is being done by members of this organization has been needed for a long time. It is not yet too late, though it soon will be, to identify practically all the early tools and utensils that were used in the days of hand industry. Each issue of *THE CHRONICLE*, the publication of the association, sets forth newly discovered data that help to reconstruct the hand processes of manufacture. Each meeting of the members reveals some fact that has not been known before. The bound volumes of *THE CHRONICLE* will constitute valuable source material for writers of the future."

Members are again reminded that, in order to receive notices of these local meetings, they must communicate with one of the officers, in order that they may be placed on the special mailing list. Another New York meeting is contemplated during January or February.

## Wooden Shoe Pegs

In the extremely interesting and well conducted demonstration of early industries, held last fall at the Pioneers' Village, at Salem, Mass., about the only apparent anachronism was the use of wooden pegs by a shoemaker dressed in seventeenth century attire. Popular belief to the contrary notwithstanding, it appears to be irrefutably established that this device was not known to the trade until the nineteenth century was well under way. According to *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, by Chauncey M. Depew (1895), p. xix, and *Hawkers and Walkers in Early America*, by Richardson Wright (1927), p. 101, wooden shoe pegs were invented in 1811, the soles having previously been sewed by hand. Knight's *American Mechanical Dictionary* (1874), p. 335, fixes the date as 1818, and names the inventor as Joseph Walker, of Hopkinton, Mass. *The Book of Trades*, by James Wyld, London (1866), p. 64, states that "of late years (italics ours) wooden pegs have been very much used. They have the advantage of wearing slowly, and when wetted, they swell, and so are not liable to give way or leave the leather," — apparently a comparison with steel nails. Both Knight (p. 1650) and Depew (p. xix) refer to machines for cutting and driving wooden pegs in the middle of the nineteenth century.

# The Chronicle

## Curious Dates

By H. K. LANDIS

Anyone engaged in antiquarian research will have come across these curiosities in methods of recording dates, and it would make an interesting subject for further study. In general they are not accidental nor freakish, but have a distinct meaning and interpretation that adds something to the record or reflects the influence of an established custom. Thus, for example, when Germans wrote 1730, they made it "Jahr 1730". But when the date is put upon a house date stone at the end of the inscription, this "Jahr 1730" would appear clumsy and throw the date out of center. So, the "Jahr" is abbreviated to J, the stem of this letter serves as the 1 in the date and it becomes "J730". This is a very common occurrence, and when made by decorators who did not appreciate its significance, the J is sometimes reversed, modified and ornamented to an extent for which there seems no reason. In the dates given in the illustration, (l) and (p), the stem is carried downward to complete the figure 1; in (j), (u) and (o) are seen the rudiments or remnants of the 1 in the dates illustrated from (a) to (h).

The first column represents the 1 in the dates preceded by the Latin designation *anno domini* or a.d. The 1 forms the stem of the d, the loop is the a. Thus we have a monogram consisting of a, d, and 1 combined, — only a few of the variations.

A very good example of how this is done is illustrated in the date stone of "Henrich Brubacher" who built a stone house in 1765 and placed a date stone in the peak. He was quite evidently a Pennsylvania German and the stone cutter did as well as he knew how, which accounts for the spelling. The date is similar to (h). Rarely, this loop is reversed, as in (j), the artisan evidently not knowing its significance. It is evident that the tail with which the loop of the d is carried across is simply an attempt at ornamental effect. These monograms are found in various places, including the early stove plates for five-plate stoves. (See Mercer's "Bible in Iron".) The "Hans Herr house", in Lancaster County, has the following over the door cut in the stone lintel: "17 CHHR 19" in which the figure 1 resembles the 1 in date (c), except that the tail is carried back over the line to form an S reversed.

Another variation of this idea are the dates on wagon jacks made for the old Conestoga wagons. Here appearances are also considered, so that the monogrammed 1 looks something like an H. That is, there is first a J, then another J reversed and a line crosses the stems making an H. The monogram thus consists of J-H-J-1, or abbreviations of the designation "Jahr Herr Jesu Ein"; in plain English this would be: "In the year of our Lord 1766." These monograms appear

a	d	760	i	1742
b	d	748	j	1752
c	d	755	k	1765
d	d	756	l	1764
e	d	756	m	1769
f	d	763	n	1728
g	d	762	o	1796
h	d	765	p	1746

EXAMPLES OF VARIATION IN FIRST FIGURE MONOGRAMS

on jacks in the Landis Valley Museum from 1732 to 1860, the mechanism being also the same, although attempts were sometimes made by inventors to improve on the old design. No doubt a wider search would reveal other monograms. The Penn-Germania section of Pennsylvania abounded in dates; many things were dated, even tools, bags, chests, coverlets, and whatnot. The curious fact is that, although they did not hesitate to put their names, initials and dates on these things, in their account books, copy books, etc., these are so often lacking. Imagine the feelings of a student of old things when he buys a ledger or "waste book" without the year, name of owner or locality!

A curious incident occurred while looking over our books on folk lore. The date at the bottom of the title page was 11 (the year eleven). The book was published in German. Then it occurred to us that the French Revo-

lutionary Calendar, extending from September 22, 1792, to December 31, 1805, beginning with the year 1, would include the probable date of publication — say 1803.

Then Mr. Heffner brought us the date: C I D I D C L X X X V I I for translation. The date was 1687. Thus the first three characters together are a crude representation of M or one thousand; the next two represent a D or five hundred, and the remainder as in the Roman notation. Spoffard's "Book for All Readers" will tell the rest of the story. Anyone making a collection of curious dates might also include continuous and hundred-year calendars. There are a number of ingenious devices for telling days of the week for given dates and any year, and they are interesting.

It was also the practice in the seven-teen-hundreds to record the sign of the zodiac under which a child was born, along with the date, since the almanac foretold what its characteristics and fortune would be. There are many varying predictions of this kind, enough to make a collection.



The following advertisement of O. Stebbins & Co., appeared in the *Hampshire Gazette*, Northampton, Mass., July 14, 1806:

"Brass and white Nails, A large assortment of Wood Screws, different sizes, door, table, and pew door Butts, H and HL Hinges; polished and japan'd Norfolk Thumb Latches, brass do and Knockers, common and casteel Chissels, and Gouges, Insetts, Turning Chissels and Gouges, common and cast-steel double and single Plain-Irons, Kenyon's best hand and pannel, steel-back wood, sash, key-hole, fret, and bow Saws, Hollback's steel plate Cross-cut, Venneering, and Tennant Saws, large box and pocket Rules, Iron Squares, best rule joint steel point Compasses, brass Dividers, all sizes: flatt and half-round Files and Rasps, of every description, spike and nail Gimblets, shoe, nail and sadlers Hammers, Shoe Knives, Tacks, Pincers, Nippers, patent and common, Awl Blades and hafts, cutting Nippers, hand and bench Vices, Pruning Knives, best No. 2 English Shovels and Spades, Farnsworth's celebrated Scythes, 1d, 2d, 3d, 4d, 5d, and 6d Brads, 14 oz and 8 oz tacks, 2d, 3d, 4d, fine and stout Clouts, fine drawn 4d, 8d, 10d, & 20d, English & Cut Nails." — H. G. H.



# Early American Industries Association

## Membership

Membership lists should be amended as follows: Corrections are in italics; (N) indicates new member; (S) indicates non-member subscriber; (Ch.) indicates change of address. We do not attempt, at this time, to give an exact figure for the total membership, as, in spite of all our urgent pleas for prompt payment, the renewals are still drifting in every day, and it is impossible now to determine how many more will be received.

### CONNECTICUT

*Cheshire*: Allen, Bernard A. (N)  
*Litchfield*: Seymour, O. S. (Ch. from New York, N. Y.)  
*New Haven*: Kelly, J. Frederick.  
*South Manchester*: Nickerson, J. W., 209 Pine St. (N)  
*Willimantic*: Butman, Miss Marion, State Normal School (N)

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

*Washington*: Morris, Mrs. George (Ch. to Wardman Park Hotel.)

### INDIANA

*South Bend*: Northern Indiana Historical Society.

### MAINE

*Falmouth Foresides*: Berry, Mrs. Harold Lee, Casco Fort. (N)  
*Portland*: Springer, Miss Helen A., 45 Exeter St. (N)

### MASSACHUSETTS

*Amherst*: Lamb, Augustus C., No. Pleasant St. (N)  
*Ashburnham*: White, Walter C., Jr., P. O. Box 82. (N)  
*Boston*: Belden, F. A. (Ch. to Weston, Mass.); Jacobs, Mrs. Bessie R., 73 Newbury St. (N)  
*Brockton*: Wright, William M., 195 Main St. (N)  
*Brookline*: Geddes, Jas. (Ch. to 46 Gardner Road).  
*Charlemont*: Thayer, Mrs. F. A. (N)  
*Falmouth*: Clulow, P. T. (N)  
*Framingham*: Nutting, Wallace (N)  
*Kingston*: Weston, Mrs. H. J., 11 Summer St. (N)  
*North Pembroke*: Hall, Mrs. Margaret S. (N)  
*Mattapoisett*: York, Alfred H.; York, Mrs. S. Elizabeth.  
*Peabody*: Taylor, Frank. (N)  
*Plainville*: March, Mrs. Nara, 84 South St. (N)  
*Somerville*: Boyle, John A., 52 Webster Ave. (N)  
*West Brewster*: Clarke, H. Bradford. (N)  
*Weston*: Belden, F. A., 222 Boston Post Road. (Ch. from Boston)  
*Worcester*: Cutler, U. W. (Ch. to 63 Lancaster St.)

### MINNESOTA

*St. Paul*: Minnesota Historical Society (S)

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

*Concord*: Howe, Mrs. DeWitt Clinton, Beachill. (Ch. from New York, N. Y.)

### NEW JERSEY

*Bloomfield*: Sinclair, Dr. A. G., 67 Park Place. (N)  
*Metuchen*: Connor, J. M. (Ch. to Plainfield)

*Palisade*: Parker, Dr. H. W., 1079 Palisades Ave. (N)  
*Plainfield*: Connor, John M., Jr., 1113 St. Mark's Place (Ch. from Metuchen) Corbusier, Dr. Harold D., 614 Park Ave. (N)  
*Summit*: Moffatt, Miles R.  
*Red Bank*: Busk, J. R. (Ch. to New York, N. Y.)

### NEW YORK

*Brooklyn*: Sandford, Joseph E.  
*Elizabethtown*: Walker, Miss Margaret P. (N)  
*New York*: Busk, Joseph R., 30 E. 72nd St. (Ch. from Red Bank, N. J.); Downs, Jos.; Howe, Mrs. DeW. C. (Ch. to Concord, Mass.); Lawson, Mrs. P. C.; Renner, Mrs. Poston, 943 Lexington Ave. (N); Roe, Prof. J. V., Museum of S. and I. (Ch. to R.C.A. Bldg., 30 Rockefeller Plaza); Seymour, O. S. (Ch. to Litchfield, Conn.)  
*Rochester*: Foreman, Edward R., Edgerton Park (N).  
*Rockaway Beach*: Devaney, John. (Ch. to 109-21 Boulevard)  
*Staten Island*: Kollmer, Burton A.  
*White Plains*: Clarke, Howard, 17 Ridgewood Ave. (N)

### OHIO

*Columbus*: Durell, Edward, 500 Dublin Ave. (N)

### RHODE ISLAND

*Providence*: Allen, Alexander, 195 Freeman Parkway (N); Allen, Mrs. Alexander, 195 Freeman Parkway (N); MacKenzie, Miss Clara, 268 Broad St. (N)



## More About Soft Soap

By GEORGE R. COPE

"I read the article 'Soft Soap' in your No. 13 issue of THE CHRONICLE, and as I happen to know something about its making I thought maybe it would be interesting to the readers of this booklet to know something more in regards to its making. The writer of your article did not state where the name 'Ash Gum' originated. The original container for the ingredients for making the lye was made from a log of the Gum tree. The construction of the wood in this particular tree being adapted for this purpose, so the name Ash Gum. The log selected was hollowed out to receive the ingredients and was placed in an inconspicuous place about the buildings, and was set upon the lye-stone which was mentioned. These stones are very rare now. I came upon one, half buried in the ground, upon my wanderings through the country. There are very few people of today that know what they were used for. The ingredients used in the 'Ash Gum' for the making of the lye was a bottom layer of either fine meadow grass or straw, then a layer of lime, then a layer of hickory, as this kind of wood ash contained the most potash. These layers were put in alternately until the

Ash Gum was filled to the right capacity. After filling the gum as stated, rain water was added by pouring on top, from time to time gradually, until the water seeped out at the bottom. This liquid was called 'potash lye' or just 'lye'. In after years, when barrels and other articles were more easily obtained, the old gum logs were abandoned and the hopper container took its place. Dry straw was generally used in the barrels instead of the meadow grass. After the lye was extracted and the soap made, the housewife generally had a surplus and this she would offer for sale at the stores. The old 'General Store' had a barrel to put this soap in. As an apprentice boy, I went into a grocery store to work. One of our articles for sale was 'Soft Soap'. It always fell to my lot to dip out this slippery mass, very much to my dislike. I usually sold 1 quart soft soap and 1 quart pewter sand to a housewife. Besides using this soap on wash days, in those days they had oak floors in their kitchens. The housewife, in scrubbing up her floor Saturday afternoon, would throw a splotch of soft soap here and there over the floor, together with the pewter sand, and then scrub the floors until they were spick and span. This was what soft soap was used for more than anything else, besides cleaning the pots and pans. Soft Soap was always made in the spring of the year, when they had plenty of ashes on hand from the winter fires, and also a good supply of drippings of fat from the winter cooking. They always used a sassafras stick to stir the soap with. When they were making the soap, if a neighbor came to call, it was always a superstition that they would have better soap, if the neighbor helped stir it in the making. Soft soap was also used to tan hide for leather, — the sort called rawhide, — used for making thongs, hame straps, shoe strings and many other things used about the farm. As the article in No. 13 of THE CHRONICLE gave a good account of soft soap, I shall not go into detail of making the soap, except to say that the lye was tested, as stated, with an egg, and if too strong, rain water was added to weaken it. The lye was put in a large iron pot hung outside over an open fire. The lye was brought to a boil, and the proportionate amount of fat which had been rendered or 'tried out' was slowly added, stirring the boiling liquid until the mixture was the thickness required, but never too thick to pour."

## COMMUNICATIONS

From MR. W. S. DAKIN, Senior Supervisor, Department of Rural Education, State of Connecticut:

"After seeing the remarkable collection of old tools and implements assembled by Mr. William B. Sprague at his home near Litchfield, Connecticut, the writer was impressed by its unique educational value. In most collections, too much emphasis has been placed on household articles and not enough on the hand tools, machinery, and ingenious devices used by colonial mechanics in their small home shops and neighborhood factories. Perhaps tools lack artistic appeal, but they give a new understanding of frontier life, and a better appreciation of the native ability required to perfect and use instruments for preparing, cutting, shaping, and fashioning local fabrics, woods, and metals. Although as tools, these types may never be employed again on a commercial scale, the knowledge of the implements and processes formerly used to make candles, pails, wheels, spoons, brooms, and countless other articles for common usage should be preserved, as is being done by Mr. Sprague. In their simplicity and directness may be seen principles that later were developed into modern automatic machinery. Industrial antiques have, for many children, especially boys, an interest untouched by collections of household furnishings. For them there is, in the ingenious locks, traps, steel-yards, wooden pulleys and cogs, a challenge to imitate, to experiment, and possibly to invent something on their own account. This interest also stimulates reading and further study of the beginnings of industrial society. Such collections may also contribute valuable suggestions to those interested in developing hand crafts, that will provide profitable occupations for many in their free hours. It is hoped that the time will soon come when there may be funds available for the establishment of an industrial museum wherein may be gathered and preserved for public display all possible tools and products of the skill that gave Connecticut its industrial leadership."

"Horse Shoe Machine.—Mr. Burden, the inventor of the double steam boat, has contrived a machine for making horse shoes, which will throw off thirty perfect ones in a minute. What will the blacksmiths think of this?" — *The Boston Mechanic*, April, 1835.

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From MR. FRANK K. SWAIN:

"When William Penn returned to England in 1684, his great manor house, called 'Pennsbury', along the Delaware River, in Bucks County, Pa. was still unfinished. In August, 1684, he wrote to his Manager, James Harrison, about the necessary outbuildings, as follows: 'I would have a kitchen, two larders, a wash-house, a room to iron in, a brew house, and a MILAN oven for baking, and a stabling for twelve horses.' What was a Milan oven? The great bake-oven of the English and German settlers in the county was a large, circular, domed or arched cavity of stone or brick, connected in some way either to the back or to the jamb of the great kitchen fireplace. There would be no reason for calling this a Milan oven, and no other type has been found in examining dozens of old houses of the county, either in the English or German district. The new Oxford Dictionary gives 'MILAN STEEL: Steel used by the armourers of Milan, Lombardy, in the manufacture of coats-of-mail, swords, knives, needles, etc.' May we suppose that Penn's oven was of solid steel, in one piece, or constructed of heavy steel plates, backed up with masonry and unlike any other oven in the county? Another interesting note about Milan is that it was famous for its 'Milan Bonnets' as early as 1507, and a native bonnet maker was called a 'Millaner', and his work 'Millanery', now obsolete, but converted into feminine 'milliner' and 'millinery', in Europe and America, and without any apparent connection. In looking over some old local store records of 1800-1820, we find an item repeated two or three times — '1 Doz. Milan Stones'. Are these carpenter or reapers whetstones, or are they grind-stones? In Castanheda's *Conquest of East India*, 1 liv. 116 B. translated 1582, is quoted, 'with them went two Milanesis, which were Lapidaries', that is, Milan stone-cutters."

"Messrs. S. and Co. of Wells Maine, have lately erected a hulling mill. It hulls and splits peas; and hulls, not only barley, but all other kinds of corn and pulse with the greatest expedition. I am informed that the toll they take for hulling barley at the mill above mentioned is two sixteenths, or four quarts out of a bushel. This appears to be but a moderate toll." SAMUEL DEANE. *The New-england Farmer*, 1797.

Through the kindness of Mr. Charles C. Wall, Assistant Superintendent at Mount Vernon, we reprint the following, from George Washington's pocket memorandum book of expenses:

	£	S	P
FEB. 22, 1774 —			
By Cash Pd Mr. Thos Fleming for a Smith's Bellows		6	0 0
MARCH 24, 1774 —			
Mem m of Sundrys sent out by Gilbert Simpson for the use of, & towards building my mill on Youghiogany viz—			
10 Best Dutch Blankets @ 10/		5	0 *
10 M 10d Nails @ 7/6		3	15 *
10 M 20d ditto 11/6		5	15 *
500 30d ditto 26/3		13	
300 Sadlers Tacks		1	
1 Yard Russia Sheeting		2	
A Bellows Pipe Ring & Gudg ns		5	
By Sundry Smiths Tools from Mr. Fleming—			
Viz—			
C Q Lbs			
1 Anvill 1 2 16 @ 42/		4	6 3
Ster g		2	9 4
1 Large Vise 39½ lb @ 1/3		10	6
2 Smiths Hamm rs 10½ 1/		10	
2 pr Smiths Tongs 10/			
		23	7 *
Expenses in transporting them over to Youghiog y		7	0 *
6 Flat Files		15	
		31	2 *
Charge my copartnership with Gilb t Simpson with one best whipsaw & Files 45/		2	5 *

\* Pence obscured.

The first American glass beads were manufactured, about 1608, in Jamestown, Va., for trade and commerce with the Indians. The London Company sent Captain William Norton, accompanied by four Italians and two servants, to the dismantled Jamestown glass factory, which they revived on July 25, 1621. The work was of short duration, due to the Indian massacre of 1622.

The name "tipstave" for a peace officer was derived from the six-foot, brass-tipped, black staff which he often carried.



